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LETTER DATED 4 FEBRUARY 2000 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PORTUGAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement issued on 31 January 2000 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the normalization of relations between the Sudan and the neighbouring countries (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Antonio MONTEIRO
Permanent Representative of Portugal
to the United Nations

Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement issued on 31 January 2000 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the normalization of Sudanese relations with neighbouring countries

The European Union welcomes the recent steps towards normalization of bilateral relations between Sudan and its neighbours, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda, and reaffirms the importance of a constructive dialogue aiming at stability and cooperation in the region. It recalls that the normalization of such relations is one of the elements addressed in the current "renewed dialogue" between the European Union and the Government of Sudan. The European Union looks forward to further steps in Sudan's relations with its neighbours to enhance the prospect of peace, stability and cooperation in the region.

The European Union encourages the Sudanese and the Ugandan authorities to abide by the provisions of the agreement signed on 8 December 1999. The European Union calls on both parties to renounce any military action, to cease military or logistical support to any rebel groups in each other's territories and to end the climate of hostility that has caused immense suffering to the civilian population. The European Union encourages the release of all prisoners of war and the return of all abducted persons - especially children - to their families.

The European Union also welcomes, together with the consolidation of relations between Sudan and Ethiopia, the Sudanese and Eritrean decision to resume diplomatic relations, which will help to improve the security and stability of the region. It encourages the opening of common borders and the resumption of scheduled flights between the two countries.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, and the countries of the European Free Trade Association members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.